
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Date April 20, 2020

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP & CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING MEETING

Chlorine Water Quality Objectives, Total Residual Chlorine Effluent Limitation, and Mercury Water Quality Objectives

BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT

Friday, May 22, 2020, 10 am – 12 pm

[Click to Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Join by phone:

[+1 916-562-0861](tel:+19165620861) United States, Sacramento (Toll)

Conference ID: 947 559 452#

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff will hold a public workshop and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to seek public input on the scope, content, and potential environmental effects from updating the chlorine and mercury water quality objectives in the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay Basin ([Basin Plan](#)). The meeting will be conducted by video and teleconference. Members of the public will be able to listen to and watch the meeting and comment using the link provided above.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would amend Basin Plan Chapter 3 to adopt the chlorine water quality criteria established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and to update the mercury water quality objectives to reflect mercury objectives recently adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board. The project would also amend Basin Plan Chapter 4 to implement the chlorine objectives.

Chlorine

Chlorine or chlorine compounds are used to disinfect water and wastewater to kill pathogens, and any excess chlorine enters the receiving water in the forms of free and combined chlorine (referred to as total residual chlorine or TRC). TRC is toxic to aquatic organisms at low concentrations.

The Basin Plan does not have chlorine objectives to protect aquatic life. Instead, the Basin Plan includes a stringent TRC technology-based effluent (discharge) limitation, 0.0 milligrams per liter, as instantaneous maximum, to ensure no TRC is discharged into the receiving water. To ensure

JIM McGRATH, CHAIR | MICHAEL MONTGOMERY, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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compliance with this discharge limit, wastewater treatment plant operators report overdosing with chemicals to neutralize TRC. This overdosing results in wastewater treatment plant operators incurring about 0.7 million dollars in additional costs annually and does not necessarily provide additional protection to aquatic life uses. Thus, we propose to replace the Basin Plan's TRC technology-based effluent limitation with a water quality-based effluent limitation, with considerations of mixing zones and dilution credits for calculating this limit, and a minimum level for laboratory analysis and an averaging period to calculate effluent concentrations for compliance determination (Chapter 4). To establish a water quality-based effluent limitation, we must first adopt the applicable water quality objectives for chlorine (Chapter 3).

Mercury

Part 2 of the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California (Statewide Mercury Provisions) contains mercury water quality objectives and implementation provisions of those water quality objectives. The project would remove the four-day average mercury water quality objective in the Basin Plan (Chapter 3) to be consistent with the new statewide water quality objectives.

To recap, the Basin Plan Amendment (BPA) would:

1. Add to Chapter 3 the chlorine water quality objectives contained in the U.S. EPA [Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Chlorine \(EPA 440/5-84-030\)](#).
2. Remove the existing TRC technology-based effluent limitation in Chapter 4.
3. Adopt implementation provisions for the chlorine objectives in Chapter 4, i.e., establish a water quality-based effluent limitation and other implementation parameters.
4. Update the mercury objectives in Chapter 3 to reflect the mercury objectives in the [Statewide Mercury Provisions](#).

MEETING FORMAT

Due to Covid-19 and current shelter-in-place order effective until May 3, 2020, and the uncertainty of when normal business can be resumed after May 3, 2020, the meeting will be conducted virtually. The link to join the video conference or dial-in phone number are provided at the top of this notice.

The meeting will consist of a public workshop where Water Board staff will describe the project followed by a question and answer session. Immediately following the workshop, Water Board staff will open a public scoping meeting, pursuant to CEQA (Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.).

The Water Board is required to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a BPA to adopt new water quality objectives and will incorporate this environmental analysis into the BPA staff report and BPA. During the scoping session, we will discuss and take comments from the public on the scope and content of the project and its potential environmental effects. Scoping helps the Water Board identify the range of actions, alternatives, whether potentially significant environmental effects exist that need to be mitigated, and if yes, what mitigation measures could be taken.

Staff Contact: Tong Yin at tong.yin@waterboards.ca.gov.